



State of Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Administrative Policies and Procedures: 31.14

Subject: Case Recordings for Foster Care, Adoption Services and Juvenile Justice Cases

Supersedes: DCS 31.14, 09/01/03

Local Policy: No

Local Procedures: No

Training Required: No

Applicable Practice Model Standard(s): Yes

Approved by:

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Application

To All Department of Children's Services Foster Care, Adoption Services and Juvenile Justice Field Case Management and Supervisory Employees

Authority: TCA 37-5-106

Policy

Each contact (successful or unsuccessful) with or on behalf of clients will be documented in TN Kids case recordings within thirty (30) days from the date of the contact.

Procedures

A. Purpose of case recordings

1. Case recordings serve as the official record of efforts made to serve DCS client children/youth and families. This information may be used in administrative hearings, court proceedings, audits, and reviews.
2. Case recordings serve as a supervisory tool for management and administrative staff.
3. Case recordings serve as a reference tool for the case management staff for preparing court summaries and other documents, and at the point of case transfer when new professionals are assigned and in need of historical

information on the current case.

4. Case recordings capture historical information that may be useful after the case is closed if the family has a subsequent relationship with DCS through referrals, reentry, or through the next generation.
5. Case recordings can provide important information about the child/youth's life should s/he request it after s/he becomes an adult.

B. Confidentiality and sensitivity

1. When writing case recordings, staff shall be mindful of the right to *confidentiality* and shall not include information about persons unrelated to the case, except where those persons have a direct effect on the client child/youth and family (in which case, only relevant information shall be documented).
2. When writing case recordings, without sacrificing accuracy and completeness, staff shall be sensitive to the emotional well being of the client child/youth and family in the choice of terminology used (being mindful that the client child/youth and family may be voluntarily or involuntarily exposed to the documentation in the future).

C. Appropriateness and quality of case recordings

1. Case recordings must:
 - a) Be written in clear and complete sentences,
 - b) Be written concisely without omitting relevant information, and
 - c) **Not** Include ***slang*** language or subjective/personal value judgments.
2. Abbreviations and acronyms used must be commonly understood and acceptable.
3. E-mail should not be pasted directly into case recordings.

D. Case recordings and permanency planning

Case recordings for custodial cases shall:

1. Specifically address the strengths and needs identified in the permanency plan, wherever appropriate.

2. Specifically address the efforts and progress made towards permanency plan activities and goals.
3. Include information regarding the child/youth's development.

E. Contact outline

1. Case recordings that document contacts with or on behalf of client children/youth and families shall identify:
 - a) The name (and relationship to the client child/youth) of each person contacted,
 - b) The location of the contact (if the contact is face-to-face or an unsuccessful face-to-face attempt or if the contact documents a family or sibling visitation that was not supervised by the person entering the contact),
 - c) The beginning and end times of the contact, and
 - d) If telephone contact was made, list who initiated the telephone call.
2. The narrative of case recordings that document contacts (face to face, or significant telephone calls) with or on behalf of client children/youth and families shall be written in the following "PC-COP" format:
 - a) **Purpose of Contact**
 - b) **Content** - state what was discussed and/or accomplished (specifically indicate any private conversations that occur between case manager and child/youth)
 - c) **Observation/Assessment** -state in observable/measurable terms: individual behaviors and appearance, interactions among party's present, significant environmental factors, any progress made.
 - d) **Plan** - state what is to be done next as a result of this contact, or as a natural progression of the case management process, including date/time and location of the next planned contact.

F. Unsuccessful contacts

1. Unsuccessful attempts to make direct or telephone contact with or on behalf of client children/youth and families shall be entered as a case recording.

2. The following minimum information must be included in such case recordings:

- a) Date and time of the unsuccessful contact,
- b) Who was to be contacted,
- c) The location of the unsuccessful contact,
- d) If it was an attempted direct contact, whether the person(s) to be contacted was/were aware of the planned contact,
- e) Plan for rescheduling the contact.

G. Reviews, Hearings, & Child and Family Team Meetings

- 1. The narratives typed in the ***“Reviews, Hearings, & Child and Family Team Meetings”*** icon in TN Kids must comply with Section “E” (contact outline) of this policy.
- 2. All efforts made by DCS staff to encourage and accommodate participation (including notification) of involved parties in reviews, hearings, & child and family team meetings shall be documented in case recordings.

H. Correspondence and other documentation

Documentation of e-mail, regular mail, facsimiles (faxes), and other materials received/sent may be recorded in TN Kids case recordings and, if documented, will include the following minimum information:

- 1. Date sent or received,
- 2. Name (and relationship to the client child/youth) of the sender and recipient,
- 3. Type and date of the document,
- 4. Summary of the pertinent information,
- 5. Any planned action to be taken based on the content of the document, and
- 6. Location of the document.

I. TN Kids contact types

A list of the intended use of the contact types may be obtained from case recordings trainers, Permanency Support Unit staff, and Field Systems Administrators.

- J. Supervisory responsibility**
1. When supervisory staff give directions to case management staff regarding a specific action to be taken (or not taken) related to a case, that conversation shall be entered by the supervisor as a TN Kids case recording.
 2. Supervisors will review TN Kids case recordings in accordance with DCS policy [31.1, Program Operations Quarterly File Review](#) and as needed to ensure that appropriate case work and documentation are occurring for each case under their supervision.
- K. Contact with DCS attorneys**
1. Conversations between DCS case management staff and DCS attorneys may be documented in TN Kids case recordings, but shall be limited to the date, time, person(s) contacted, and purpose of contact.
 2. Specific content of the discussion is considered attorney-client privilege, and should not be recorded in the official record (neither TN Kids, nor the child/youth's file).
- L. Printing case recordings**
1. TN Kids case recordings may be printed and placed in the child/youth's record for convenience, however, that process is not required.
 2. If the case recordings are printed and placed in the child/youth's record, the process must comply with DCS Policies [9.2, Youth Case Files In DCS Community Residential Facilities](#), [9.7-DOE, Standardization and Confidentiality of Youth Master Files](#) and [31.5, Program Operations Child Case Files](#).
 3. Regardless of whether or not the TN Kids case recordings are printed and placed in the child/youth's record, the official case recordings are those in TN Kids.
 4. Case recordings shared with DCS by contract agencies shall be placed in the child/youth's record. It is not required that contract agency case recordings be entered into TN Kids.

Forms

None

Collateral Documents

TN Kids Case Recordings Contact Types

Handouts from TN Kids Case Recordings Training Curriculum

Standards

DCS Practice Model Standard – 5-301A

DCS Practice Model Standard – 5-502

DCS Practice Model Standard – 5-600

DCS Practice Model Standard – 5-601

DCS Practice Model Standard – 5-602

DCS Practice Model Standard – 5-603

DCS Practice Model Standard – 5-604

Glossary

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<i>Slang:</i>	Unconventional words or phrases that express either something new or something old in a new way. It is flippant, irreverent, or it may be indecent or obscene.